

# THE CATHOLIC MIND

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## Does Communism Make War on Religion?

JOHN A. O'BRIEN

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## God of the Godless and Christian Hypocrites

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## Church of Christ and the Absolute State

RAYMOND O'FLYNN

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# THE CATHOLIC MIND

VOL. XXXVIII

JUNE 22, 1940

No. 900

## Communism and Religion

JOHN A. O'BRIEN

*Reprinted from The Ecclesiastical Review, May, 1940.*

THE most comprehensive exposition in Europe of Communism is to be found at The Russian Institute on Via Carlo Alberto in Rome. When I visited there a special exhibit of the Communist technique of propaganda was being staged. The walls of the rooms were covered with Communist newspapers, magazines, leaflets, pictures, posters and cartoons, collected from the countries of Europe, America, Asia and Africa. It brought out in a vivid manner the ambitions of the Komintern in Moscow for world domination. If anyone has thought of Communism as a phenomenon within the Russian landscape content to remain within its borders, a glance at this exhibition would speedily disillusion him. It showed that no country was spared from the penetrating spearhead of its revolutionary technique.

The long arms of the Moscow octopus were reaching out into the capitals of the world, penetrating labor organizations and agrarian societies. Its *magna vox* was carrying unrest and discontent with the estab-

lished order into every land, preaching its gospel of class warfare and revolution. In more than twenty different languages it was singing its hymn of hate. Its flaming posters were inciting the workers to dispossess the propertied class, to overthrow the established order, and to plant upon the smoking ruins of Christian civilization the red flag of Communism. The hammer and the sickle, the red flag, and the clenched fist, the symbols of the new regime, sounded the keynote in the Communist hymn of hate.

As I studied this exhibit displaying so authentically the Soviet ideology as it impinged upon the canvasses of the different nations, I perceived that the chief targets of this crusade of hatred were the owners of property, the so-called capitalistic governments, religion and the Christian moral code.

The systematic efforts of Communism to liquidate the capitalistic system are known to the world. To force the collectivization of farms upon the Kulaks of Russia, Stalin did not hesitate to starve from four to six million peasant farmers. The crusade against religion is scarcely less violent. Yet to win Americans, to whom freedom of religious worship is a sacred right, Communists often seek to disguise their hatred of religion.

#### "WE RESPECT RELIGIOUS BELIEFS"

Thus Earl Browder, the Secretary of the Communist Party of the United States, writes: "Communists take religious beliefs into account. *We respect these beliefs*, because we think that religious-minded people will participate in the social revolution. . . . We Communists are completely opposed, on principle, to state coercion in regard to religious beliefs."<sup>1</sup> This is a typical example of the tactics of the Communist, changing his color like the chameleon to suit every new environment.

<sup>1</sup> *What is Communism?* pp. 190-191.

Thus does he disguise the nature of his creed until the unwary individual has been caught in its tentacles and can no longer escape. This deceptive practice of the Communists is admirably exposed in the exhibit in Rome. Tempering the wind to the shorn lambs, the Communists begin stealthily, seeking to twine its doctrines around the ideals of the nation, so as not to shock them by the frank display of its hatred of God, religion, the supernatural and the moral code based alike upon Christianity and Judaism.

What is the true attitude of Communism to religion? The answer is to be found in the teachings of its founders and its leaders, and in its actions where it has gained the upper hand.

"Religion is the opium of the people," wrote Karl Marx, the founder of Communism. "The people cannot be really happy until it has been deprived of illusory happiness by the abolition of religion." In accordance with this basic principle of his creed, Marx made it incumbent upon his followers to struggle to exterminate all religious belief. God, a future life, rewards or punishments after death, are to Marxists so many outworn myths which need to be banished forever from the human mind.

Frederick Engels, the co-founder of Communism, shared Marx's atheistic fervor. "In our evolutionary conception of the universe," he wrote, "there is absolutely no room for either a Creator or a Ruler." Like Marx, he urged a crusade to uproot all religious belief.

#### "WE MUST FIGHT RELIGION"

"Marxism is materialism," said Lenin, the Father of the Soviet Republic. "We must fight religion. That is the A, B, C, of all materialism, consequently also of Marxism. We must know *how* to fight religion, and for this purpose we must explain on materialistic lines the origin of faith and religion to the masses. The Marxist must be a materialist—that is, an enemy of religion.

Religion is opium for the people. Our program necessarily includes the propaganda of atheism."

Not content with merely pointing out this basic hostility in theory, Lenin demanded that it be translated into action. "Religion must be abolished," he wrote. "The best country is a Godless country. If religion would pass out quietly, our attitude will be one of benevolent tolerance. But if it resists we will hasten its exit by violence proportionate to its resistance."

Listen to Stalin, the present dictator of Russia: "Keep children away from religious training and home life until they are eighteen years of age; then they will be good Communists." Lunacharsky, the late head of the education department, writes: "We hate Christianity and Christians; even the best of them must be reckoned among our worst enemies."

Stepanoff, one of the foremost leaders of Communism, urges the dismemberment of the Church and the eradication of all belief in God. "We ought so to act," he declares, "that each blow delivered against the traditional structure of the Church, each blow at the clergy, attacks religion in general. . . . Even the blindest see how indispensable is the decisive struggle against the Pope, whether he be called pastor, abbé, rabbi, patriarch, mullah or pope; and this struggle ought to develop no less ineluctably against God, be he called Jehovah, Jesus, Buddha or Allah."

#### PRIVATE MATTER BUT PUBLIC FIGHT

I have heard Communist speakers in Great Britain and in America pretend that religion was a private matter with which Communism would not interfere. Lenin, however, flatly contradicts them. "To the proletarian Socialist Party," he writes, "religion is not a private matter. The party of the proletariat demands *from the State* the proclamation of religion as a private affair, but does not regard as a private affair the question of the fight against the opium of the people."

This curious passage means that the State by proclaiming that religion is a private affair is relieved of any obligation to support it, and in countries where the Church is supported by the State, the State should disestablish it, and then proceed to wage war against it as stupefying the people. The fight against the private affair of religious worship should be a public one. The State, Lenin avers, should throw itself into the crusade to exterminate the private habit of taking religious dope.

The Russian Soviet Constitution of January 23, 1918, in article 4, declares: "Freedom of religion and anti-religious propaganda is guaranteed to all citizens." This apparently allowed too much freedom to religion, for the Official Program issued by the Communist Party in March, 1919, in No. 13, states: "In the matter of religion the K. P. R. is not content with the separation of the Church and the State, and School and Church, already decreed. . . . The Party will use every endeavor to destroy the bond between the exploiting class and the organizations for religious propaganda conducting an anti-religious campaign, organized on an extensive scale on behalf of scientific enlightenment, which will contribute to the emancipation of the masses from religious prejudices."

The Communist International, which is under the direct control of the Russian Communist Party, passed at its Fifth World Congress in 1924 the following decree: "In our struggle against bourgeois prejudices and superstitions, the campaign against religion occupies a special position. It is a campaign that must be conducted with all necessary tact and prudence, particularly among those sections of the proletariat in whose daily life religion has hitherto been firmly rooted."

Realizing the difficulty of taking religion from adults to whom it has been a life-long practice, the Soviet authorities are concentrating on the young. By

depriving them of all religious instruction, they hope to make confirmed atheists of them. This plan is disclosed in the Official Circular on religious instruction in the U.S.S.R., published on January 3, 1929, which decrees: "The religious instruction of children before they come to school or during their attendance at school, given in churches, or in other places dedicated to religious worship, or in private houses, is forbidden. . . . No one who has not yet completed his eighteenth year may receive religious instruction. As regards the teaching of theological subjects, properly so-called, this may be allowed with the authorization of the Soviet officials . . . no one below the age of eighteen years may assist at such instructions."

#### ATHEISTIC PROPAGANDA

The war on religion was further intensified by the General Soviet Congress in April, 1929. Freedom of conscience and liberty of religious profession were suppressed, while new measures to make more effective the anti-religious propaganda were enacted. Thus a decree of April 8, 1929, Article 18, declares: "The teaching of any kind of religious belief whatsoever is forbidden in State, public or private schools."

M. Yaroslavsky, who was head of the Ministry of Atheism under Lenin, has been entrusted by Stalin with the leadership of the anti-religious campaign. As President of the Godless League he is directing one of the most brutal and scientific persecutions in the history of religion. Not content with government legislation as a weapon, Yaroslavsky makes generous use of cartoons and caricatures to ridicule religion and those who practise it. Religion is variously pictured as the weapon used by Capitalism to hold the people in subjection, as the invention of priestcraft, as a form of fanaticism, and as an antediluvian myth which all enlightened people have rejected. Workers are urged to regard it not only as superfluous but as directly op-



posed to social progress and as the deadly enemy of the welfare of the laboring classes.

An interesting insight into the nature of the campaign is afforded by the address of M. Kalinin, President of the Executive Committee of the Congress of the Soviets, to an assembly of the Godless League. The Soviet organ, *Izvestia*, No. 3674, June, 1929, reports the meeting. The theme was: "The war against religion is a necessary and very efficacious means for opening the way to Communism." M. Kalinin concluded: "Comrades, it seems to me that our propaganda work concerning the anti-religious front is relatively weak. Atheism and the godless society must be introduced into factories, workshops, dockyards and the districts. . . . However, a measure of prudence is necessary, for the war against religion needs more than merely external weapons; this war is really a philosophy, for it means the establishment of materialism against idealism. Hence the government cannot legislate according to its wishes if the ground is not prepared. Let us suppose that tomorrow is Easter Day; doubtless from the viewpoint of a member of the Godless League, all who participate in such a vain and useless festival should be exterminated forthwith and without mercy. . . . But, Comrades, if the action of the government appears weak to you, the leaders of atheism, remember that centres of atheistic activities must be increased and developed so that the government may place no limits to its external legislation for the suppression of religion."

#### CARING FOR THE PRIEST—A CRIME

The clergy have been reduced to a pitiable condition. Debarred from all participation in education, ridiculed and abused, they form the "outcasts and untouchables" of Russian society. Any assistance offered to a priest immediately renders the donor "suspect" and liable to

prosecution on the charge of counter-revolutionary activity. An indication of the attitude toward the clergy is found in an article reported in *Troud*, No. 182, of August 9, 1935. A doctor had admitted a priest into a hospital in Moscow and had ministered to him. The author of the article denounces such "unheard of conduct." The priest was isolated from the other sick in order that they would not be "irritated by his presence." The journal reports that the doctor was called upon to explain to the Soviet authorities his unseemly conduct of ministering to a priest. Apparently the only thing a priest can do when sick that will please the Soviet officials is to die, and the quicker the better. In ancient days, even lepers had certain rights, but evidently in modern Russia the only right reserved for the clergy is to die—before they are liquidated.

The separation of Church and State was a measure directed against the Russian Orthodox Church, but the hostility of Communism extends to all religion. Thus Stalin has declared: "Basing ourselves upon the interest of the proletariat, Communists *will wage a campaign against Catholicism, against Protestantism and against Orthodoxy in order to assure the triumph of the Socialist mentality.*" In 1930 the Lutheran Bishop of Leningrad was sent to the Solovetsky prison camp. Subsequently Pastor Hansen and Pastor Muss of Leningrad along with their wives were arrested and disappeared.<sup>2</sup> Rabbis were thrown into prison and religious teachers sentenced for the crime of conducting a Talmudical school.<sup>3</sup> In 1924 most of the prominent Baptist ministers were seized on the charge of religious propaganda and dispatched to unknown destinations. An order was issued closing the halls of the Salvation Army.

It is the Catholic Church, however, which is regarded by the League of Militant Atheism as "the back-

<sup>2</sup> *The Times*, London, Feb. 7, 1930.

<sup>3</sup> *The Times*, London, Feb. 17, 1930.

bone of religion" and most formidable opponent of Communism. It has accordingly been singled out for especial attack. It is pictured as the ally of Fascism and Capitalism, with the Pope as the Czar of the Vatican, intent only on stirring up imperialist wars against the proletariat. Typical of such propaganda is the following article of *Antireligiosnik* of June, 1929. Under the interesting headline, "Christianity and Imperialist Wars," the article states: "Everywhere the Pope allies himself with the most cruel tyrants of the proletariat. . . . He blesses the ferocities of the imperialists in China, and these are supported by the priests and missionaries. He organizes the civil war in Mexico, where the government, at first successful, at last in the month of June capitulated to the Pope. . . . Everywhere in the colonies the Church has supported imperialism. Christian pacifism never dares to protest against the Catholic Church, the greatest organization of the most sanguinary misdeeds in the colonies. . . . In the future imperialist war, Christianity and especially the Catholic Church will play a much more important role than that played during 1914 to 1918."

A campaign directed especially against the Catholic Church was launched by the Soviet authorities in 1923. That drive reached its climax in the mock trial of Archbishop Cieplak, Monsignor Budkiewicz, thirteen other priests and a layman. The charges against them were, teaching religion to persons under eighteen (which had been declared illegal), preaching without first submitting their manuscripts to the Soviet censor, and striving to prevent the spoilation of the churches. No attempt was made to conceal the animosity of the court toward all religion. "I spit on your religion," said Krylenko, the Government prosecutor, "as I do on all religions—on Orthodox, Jewish, Mohammedan, and the rest." Facing the accused, he asked dramatically:

"Will you stop teaching the Christian religion?"

"We cannot," they replied, "it is the law of God."

"That law," said Krylenko, "does not exist on Soviet territory. You must choose."

Though they knew what it meant, they did not hesitate to choose to obey God rather than men. For that choice Archbishop Cieplak and Monsignor Budkiewicz were condemned to death, as the trial ended on the night of Palm Sunday. The others were sentenced to various terms in prison ranging up to ten years of solitary confinement.

When the news of this condemnation reached the outside world, protests poured in from France, Italy, England, the Vatican, Germany, Spain, the United States and from almost every civilized country. The life of the venerable Archbishop was spared, but not that of Monsignor Budkiewicz. On Good Friday night he was stripped naked, pushed from his cell through a dark corridor into a cellar. Here he was half-blinded by a powerful electric light placed before him. While being thus tortured he was shot through the back of the head.<sup>4</sup> Thus did the Soviets show their scorn for the public opinion of the world.

### SCIENCE IN A STRAIT-JACKET

Propaganda against religion is not confined to the publication of newspapers, magazines, leaflets, cartoons and posters. It includes the organization of secularist festivals designed to replace the feast days of religion, the presentation of anti-God plays on the stage and on the screen, and the establishment of broadcast lectures. The keynote for this many-sided attack was sounded by Lenin, who declared it was the duty of the Communists "to disperse the fog of religion . . . by our press and oral persuasion."<sup>5</sup>

Detailed instructions as to various techniques for discrediting religion are given in *The Proletarian*

<sup>4</sup> Capt. Francis McCullagh, "The Bolshevik Persecution of Religion," p. 280.

<sup>5</sup> Lenin on Religion, p. 13.

*Reader and the Anti-Religious Campaign* by Chlebzevitch. Special stress is placed upon the use of the technical achievements of science to destroy religious faith among the masses. The following incident illustrates how this is to be done.

At an anti-religious<sup>6</sup> lecture given at Jaroslavl an interesting experiment was made. According to Comrade Ivanov's report an old icon of Christ was shown to the audience. The lecturer said with a smile: "You will not, of course, pray to this icon. We will simply ask it: 'Christ, are you for or against the Godless League?'" Suddenly a "miracle" was wrought before the eyes of the entire audience. The old icon began to shine like a newly minted coin, and around the crown writing appeared in all the colors of the rainbow: "Join the Godless League without delay" and "Long live the miracle-worker Emeljan."

For a moment the audience gazed spellbound, then broke into loud laughter. A little later the face of Christ puckered up and tears began to flow from the eyes: "Christ is weeping." When the laughter quieted down, the lecturer explained the "miracle." The icon had been prepared by treatment in the laboratory of the chemical works. Little tubes and vessels full of chemicals had been inserted in it. An artificial fat had been employed for the tears. The sky-pilots' miracles were exposed, the chemistry had compelled the icon of Christ to agitate on behalf of the Godless League! During the lecture it is found very useful to call the attention of the audience to suitable literature both verbally and by advertisements affixed to the wall.

When I read of this crude attempt by amateur scientists to blast at the foundations of religious faith, I recalled the statement made by one of the greatest living scientists, Robert Andrews Millikan, while visiting at my home at the University of Illinois. Noble Prize

<sup>6</sup> Bolshevism: *Theory and Practice*, W. Gurian, p. 351.

<sup>7</sup> Jaroslavsky, the President of the Godless League.

winner for his findings in subatomic physics, he has been in intimate contact with the leaders in scientific thought for forty years. "I know of no first-class mind," said he, "among the scientists of the world who regards the materialistic interpretation of the universe as an adequate or satisfactory explanation of the phenomena of life and nature." What a contrast between the cocksure materialism of the dilettante sciolists of the Soviets with their state-dictated creed and the reverence of this profound searcher of nature's secrets.

## The God of the Godless

*Reprinted from Orate Fratres, May 12, 1940.*

**L**ENIN used to say that the mere thought of religion caused him physical nausea. Marx called religion a dope. The Russian Government fosters the activities of the League of Militant Godless and their bitter and hateful propaganda. It has opened anti-religious museums all over the country. It permits anti-religious propaganda and forbids religious indoctrination. On amateur stages, on posters, in papers, in cartoons and in movies it propagates its nineteenth century enlightenment: "There is no God. God is a creature of the pre-scientific man, facing the yet incomprehensible nature and its yet mysterious forces."

Then, according to the godless, came science and progressively explained God away. There is no room for God in their mathematical vision of the Universe. To them God is an atavism. They don't hate Him, as He is non-existent to them. Who hates Zeus or Jupiter?

But they hate something else. Their theory is that after the bright light of science had come in and driven away the harmless god of primitive man who had previously played such an important role in everything,

when human mind was at its wit's end, two classes of people were interested to keep this god: the economic and political masters of the world, and those who had lived off the altar and man's fear of the inexplorable, the priesthoods of all religion.

In their minds these two naturally formed an alliance for the further exploitation of the idea of god which was so lucrative to them. A schoolmate of mine, who turned Communist in 1918, invited me to Moscow in 1936 to work there for an anti-fascist popular front: "You need not fear to be shot, since the Soviet Government knows that humanity needs priests as long as it has not outgrown its pre-communistic primitiveness, just as it needs drugs, alcohol and prostitution before the New Man will be a visible and tangible result of our scientific attempt to create at last the conditions which are prerequisites of his existence." Hitler's new Nordic Man and Lenin's New Man are, as we see now, both a creation of breeding, a scientific process. Underneath lies Darwin's selection theory and the attitude of a cattle or dog breeder.

The god whom the atheists—and Alfred Rosenberg—attack thus is the god of capitalists and of crafty priests. I have a collection of atheistic cartoons varying the theme of "god" on the modes of Allah, Jehovah, Buddha, Christ, the Father and other *ad lib.* forms. All of them are nauseating. In most cases he looks like a fat banker with a silk hat, a dinner coat, a big cigar, a brutal face, the eyes of a drunkard, and in other cases like a dervish. He usually wields a money bag as an emblem of power and has a \$ or £ tatooed on his forehead.

If that is the atheist conception of God, we can draw several conclusions. One concerns them: they hate their own, handmade idol. The god they hate is the injustice, hypocrisy, baseness, greed and tyranny of their fellow men—not God. They do not know that in their just indignation the real God is on their side and

that they have mistaken the evil one for the Father of Lights.

But there are also conclusions for us to draw. How is it possible that men, surrounded by Christians and living 1,800 or 1,900 years after Christ, could convince even one single person that this execrable demon of lust, greed and injustice was the true, scientific portrait of what millions of intelligent and obviously honest men worshiped as the Supreme Being? It is impossible that this should all be their fault. The Communists I have met in many countries were certainly unpleasant fellows with their attitude of hatred and all-embracing suspicion, the traits of a vindictive temper drawn in sharp lines all over their faces. I have not yet met a single one who believed in noble motives for action in anybody but a militant Communist. Everybody else to them is necessarily either a crook or stupid or misled.

But, granted this fact, is this sufficient to conclude that the god whom the godless fight is nothing but the outcome of their own wickedness? I do not think that Trotsky or Stalin or even Lenin were quite unselfish or without ambition and lust for power and fame. I don't think that the cold brutality of all of these three argues a kind and generous heart.

Yet they were possessed by the idea of justice, albeit bitter, distorted, mechanical and cruel. Outraged justice. Revengeful justice, perhaps, but still justice. They found injustice all about them, perpetrated by a world which claimed to be Christian. They did not find believers in God with a consuming zeal for justice. The best of these believers practised individual and personal charity, but far too many of them only to ease their conscience, to cover up wounds which disfigured the body social or to hide its putrid sores. The faith of most Christians had become an individualized and personal affair, a sort of insurance against shocks and the possible vicissitudes of the



hereafter. Nothing of the glow of the martyrs seemed to be left.

Were these men so wrong if they called religion a dope for the underprivileged, the desperate and the dying, when the strong, the lucky and the healthy paid only lip service to it and went ahead in their reckless and selfish lives?

The conclusion for us to draw therefore is that the god whom the godless fight bears the features of a Christian hypocrite. He is a portrait of what a desperate and outraged man saw, when he looked at contemporary Christendom from outside, painted in the burning colors of revenge and hatred—the children of desperate justice.

But when we say justice, we say God. In the depth of the souls of these rebellious men is a hidden image of the true God, the just Creator, the Father of Christ and our Father. We shall have to use extraordinary means to break down their distrust of us and to convince them of our honesty—because it is we Christians who stand in their way back to God.

## The Church and the Totalitarian State

RAYMOND O'FLYNN, M.A., C.M.S.

*Reprinted from The Catholic Gazette, London.*

**I**N the dialectic of practical thought a new social and political philosophy has emerged in our day. In opposition to the old Liberalism has appeared Totalitarianism. That is to say, the supremacy of the State is asserted against the autonomy of the individual.

Monstrous as the new conception is in its suppression of personal liberty and even blasphemous in its

subjection of religious and spiritual values to secular and material ends, it does at least emphasize an important social truth which has been disastrously neglected. It does stress the fact that man is by nature a member of society, and that neither politically, nor socially, nor religiously can he realize his full potentialities in isolation from his fellows.

And that is a point which, in the religious sphere especially, called for attention in face of the individualism fostered by Protestantism. For the Protestant theory of an invisible church, consisting of souls severally united to Christ without visible bond of communion, has issued in a chaos which is greater scandal to the Christian Name than any accidental abuse which may have attached to an undivided Christendom.

Now, it was to counteract that Protestant principle of dispersion, the definition was made which still lingers in our catechisms. It was a definition demanded by the exigencies of the time; a definition which pointed the external and juridical aspect of the Church, but which missed its very essence.

The Church is, indeed, the congregation of the Faithful, professing the same beliefs, partaking of the same sacraments and governed by its legitimate pastors under one visible head. But it is something more. For the Church has not only an external structure: it has an internal organization. It is not only a union, but a communion—more like a living organism, therefore, than a mere society conventional or natural. According to Saint Paul's expression, it is not only a body but the "Body of Christ."

When a thing is unique—when it cannot be classified—it can be explained only by analogy. And the analogy the Apostle habitually uses is that of a body of which Christ is the Head, and the Baptized are the members. So far from regarding the Church as the sum of individual believers, or as a federation of local communities, the inter-relation of the members he con-

templates is so close and vital, that it is only by incorporation in the Church that an individual can be incorporated with Christ; even as the hand or the foot, or the eye or the ear, are united to the head through being parts of the same living body. The two, in fact, are not distinct: Christ is the Church, and the Church is Christ. The Church, as it has been expressed, is Christ continued in space and time, and communicated to men.

### THE MYSTICAL BODY OF CHRIST

Therein consists the "mystery of the Gospel"; a mystery, as the Apostle says, "hidden from ages and generations but now manifested to the Saints," just as Christ had a Human Nature perceptible to "flesh and blood," while His Divine Nature was imperceptible save by those to whom the Father "revealed" it; so the outward organization of the Church is visible even to the unbeliever, while its inward divine life is known only to those who have supernatural faith. And for that reason we call the Church the "Mystical" Body of Christ; it being a reality partly seen and partly unseen—something of the nature of a "sacrament" or "mystery."

But the thing to be remembered is, that the Mystical Body is a reality and not merely a symbol—even as the Incarnation itself is a reality. And as in the Incarnation the Human Nature was united to the Divine Nature by the operation of the Holy Ghost; so by the indwelling of the same Holy Ghost the multitude of the Baptized are united to Christ not only individually but corporately, so as to constitute with Him a unique Supernatural Organism—"One Body," as the Apostle has it, and "One Spirit."

The Church, consequently, is not the association of believers, each united to Christ separately, but co-operating in the harmony of Christian Charity. It is not even the communion of souls sharing in the same

supernatural grace. It is all that, it is true. But union in charity and union in grace are only the result of a deeper unity effected by the abiding presence of a Divine Person. And that permanent relation to a Divine Person constitutes between the Baptized a bond so real and stable that, if it falls short of the substantial union of the human soul and body, it has many of the characteristics which we associate only with a personality.

There is a continuity of consciousness, a faithfulness of memory, a sense of moral obligation such as we never find in a mere institution. If the Church has preserved the Deposit of the Faith, inviolate; if, in spite of the persecutions of governments and the aberrations of secular morality, it has not compromised a single precept, or counsel, or prescription of holiness; if, at a thousand critical junctures, it has kept its balance where it might have swerved or succumbed; how are we to account for this phenomenal consistency? Not by organization; for organization is only an effect and not a cause. Not by any process of fossilization, whereby things may endure but cannot grow. Not by racial or cultural exclusiveness; for the Church has subsisted among peoples, and in ages the most diverse. Not by any abnormal principles of human loyalty elsewhere inoperative. But by some supernatural Spirit of Truth and Sanctity such as that which works in the martyr and the saint.

#### ABSOLUTE STATE CANNOT ACCEPT AN ABSOLUTE CHRIST

And precisely because the Church has the personal attributes of a martyr and a saint, it provokes the same kind of opposition. You can analyze a mere system "without remainder," as it is expressed; you can deal with it rationally; you can dislike it and calmly get rid of it. But it does not baffle you, it does not cast

you into a rage. You do not lie about it, you do not pursue it with vindictiveness, nor try to annihilate it from sheer prejudice. Yet, though the Church is the most familiar thing on earth, though each generation finds it already existing as it finds the world itself already existing, it is always treated as something strange and mysterious, something towards which people find it hard to be indifferent, something which they must either love or hate.

And hence the peculiar animosity of every Christian persecution from the days when Saul rode out to Damascus "breathing threatenings and slaughter" down to the modern dictator. For a government can leave a state church or a sect to the natural process of dissolution which attends all things human. But with the Church of Christ it can act only as it did towards Christ Himself: if it does not accept Him, it must crucify Him.

And that, actually, is the attitude of Totalitarianism. Call it what you will—Communism, Nazism, Fascism—the ideology is fundamentally the same: the Absolute State which can tolerate anything but an Absolute Christ. And so we have the persecution more or less pronounced as the philosophy of Totalitarianism is able to declare itself: in the wholesale extermination of Russia, in the slow stranglehold of Germany, in the grudging and unstable compromise of Italy. That a certain amount of economic prosperity has been achieved by even the worst of them is only to be expected, for nothing human is an unmixed evil. But there is no mistaking the spirit of Anti-Christ inherent in the very nature of the systems. A system which exalts the race, or the nation, or the class at the expense of other races, or nations, or classes, has nothing in common with a Church whose mission it is "to gather the scattered children of God into a one-ness." A system which tyrannizes over the rational liberty of the individual and the family, and proscribes all

education in history, or science, or philosophy except what subserves its own cultural ambitions, cannot tolerate the Truth which makes men free.

Yet that is the plain truth about the Totalitarian State as manifested in its metaphysical creeds, and it is time for Catholics to wake up to it. We hear of the confiscation of ecclesiastical property, of outrages inflicted on bishops and priests, of the suppression of religious associations and functions, and we deplore the injustice of it. But we are not alive to the enormity of the sacrilege; it does not come home to us that to persecute the Church is to persecute the Christ Who is identified with it; it does not strike us with horror that the same spirit of wickedness which crucified the Physical Body is now crucifying the Mystical Body. For there is not two Christs: there is only One Christ, Who was born, suffered, and died; Who is glorified in Heaven; but Who still exists on earth in the Organism through which His Redeeming grace is communicated to us.

Still, there is an awakening of consciences. In proportion as the denominations have lapsed into secularism, and the Church is left alone to confront the new Caesarism, there is a growing sense of its Divine character. There is a summoning up of energy throughout the whole Mystical Body; a sympathy of member with member; a realization that the welfare of each is involved in the welfare of all; an increased feeling of solidarity and of the one-ness of all "in Christ."

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